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JOHN W. FOUST
DRANESVILLE DISTRICT SUPERVISOR

Joint Board Matter
Chairman Bulova, Supervisors Foust, Cook and Smyth
September 10, 2013

PROPOSED CHANGES IN FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM

Background: Madam Chairman, the Library Board is currently in the process of considering implementation of significant operational changes. The Library Director has stated that changes are required to meet the evolving needs of Library users, brought on by technology and the internet, while providing services within constrained budgets. Many of the proposed changes would consolidate staff functions to allow the Library to operate with a reduced number of employees.

A beta test of the changes is planned at the Reston Regional Library and the Burke Centre Library. The beta testing was initially scheduled to commence on September 1. The Library Board has delayed the test until at least October to provide an opportunity for discussion at its September 11 board meeting.

The Library Board and the Director are to be commended for taking the initiative to consider changes that may result in more efficient ways of meeting the needs of Library users. However, we have heard from many constituents who are concerned about the adverse effects these changes, if implemented, might have. They believe that the proposed changes would substantially reduce the quality of library services in Fairfax County. We have also heard from Library employees who are concerned about the impact on service as well as the potential impact on their jobs and the Library's ability to attract qualified employees if the changes are implemented. Both the Library users and Library staff have also voiced significant concerns about a perceived lack of public outreach and input on what amounts to some very significant change proposals.

Based on the response of Library users and staff, it is apparent that there has not been the level of effective outreach and communication that should be undertaken before the proposed changes, or any material changes, are implemented by the Library Board.

Motion: Therefore, Madam Chairman, we move that the County Executive be directed to inform the Library Board, at or before its September 11 meeting, that the Board of Supervisors:

- Commends the Library Board and Director for seeking to find more efficient ways to meet the evolving needs of the public.
- Requests that the Library Board conduct an extensive outreach program to inform and educate the public and Library employees regarding the proposed changes.
- Requests that the outreach program be designed to consider the concerns raised by Library users and employees as well as their input and suggestions.
- Requests that the change proposals be modified, as deemed appropriate by the Library Board, to incorporate the input received during the public outreach process.
- Requests that the Library Board not implement any change that would have a material impact on Library users and/or Library employees until the public outreach process is completed.